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ABSTRACT

This study surveys secondary teachers and students in the state of Mississippi about the status of, and their attitudes toward, psychology courses. The results are compared with those of a similar survey conducted in Florida. In 1975, a four-page questionnaire was mailed to 375 schools in Mississippi. Of these, 198, or 52.8 percent, were filled out and returned. Data were collected on school, course, and class characteristics; popularity of psychology courses; course objectives, content, and methods; textbooks used; need for audiovisual instructional aids; and teacher and student characteristics. The study revealed that 17.7 percent of the Mississippi secondary schools surveyed offer psychology as a separate course of study for credit. In the Florida survey, approximately 53 percent of schools surveyed taught psychology. Ninety-one percent of the Mississippi teachers reported that they needed more audiovisual instructional resources to help them with their courses. One unexpected finding of the study is the similarity that exists between the types of psychology courses taught in the secondary schools of these two southern states. (Author/RM)

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THE STATUS OF PRECOLLEGE PSYCHOLOGY IN MISSISSIPPI AND FLORIDA: A COMPARATIVE REPORT

Robert J. Stahl
Assistant Professor of Education
Mississippi University for Women
Columbus, MS 39701

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PART I

A WORD FROM THE TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

Although each year over 600,000 students enroll in separate courses in Psychology in over 8,000 secondary schools throughout the United States, such courses are relatively new offerings in Mississippi. In 1976, the Mississippi State Department of Education reported that only 734 students had enrolled in Psychology courses in 17 of the state's public schools during the 1974-75 school year. In contrast, Stahl (1976) found that in the state of Florida during the same school year, 28,030 students were enrolled in Psychology courses offered in 179 of that state's secondary schools.

After moving to Mississippi in the Fall of 1975, this researcher was interested in knowing how Psychology stood in this rural, Mid-South state. In investigating the status of this subject area within the state's school system, information was sought from both the teachers of these courses and the students who enrolled in them. Finally, with the opportunity to compare data acquired from the Florida and Mississippi survey studies, the researcher sought to determine in what ways the Psychology courses were similar and different across these two Southern states. This part of the report focuses primarily on the data reported by the Mississippi psychology teachers and their Florida counterparts.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

In October, 1975, a four-page questionnaire containing 40 items accompanied by an introductory letter and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope was mailed to 388 Mississippi secondary school principals. The letter requested the principals to forward the questionnaire to the person in their school who was responsible for teaching the psychology course(s). Should no individual be assigned such a course, the principals were asked to complete the questionnaire as appropriate and return it. By December 31st, 146 responses (37.6%) were received from the initial mailing. After a more recent School Directory was secured and the original list of schools was revised to include 375 schools, a second mailing was conducted in mid-January, 1976. By March 1, 1976, a total of 198 questionnaires were received from the 375 schools surveyed (52.8%).

RESULTS

Introduction to the Returns

The survey revealed that Psychology as a separate course of study for credit was taught in 35 of the 198 Mississippi secondary schools responding to the questionnaire (17.7%). When compared to information obtained from the Mississippi State Department of Education, these 35 schools represented a 106% increase over the figure recorded in their data bank (a total of only 17 public schools). The results of the survey revealed that 23 of the 144 public schools (16.0%) and 12 of the 54 private schools (22.2%) responding to the questionnaire offered separate psychology courses to their students. In addition, 69 of the 163 respondents (42.3%) who indicated no separate psychology course was offered in their schools did report "psychological" content was included in some phase of their respective school curriculums.

This report will concern itself primarily with the responses of the 35 teachers who actually taught the separate course in psychology. The data from these 35 teachers were grouped to form the set of responses most discussed within the following pages. When and where appropriate to this discussion, the responses of the 163 nonpsychology teacher-respondents are presented.[1]

In the spring of 1975, an almost identical questionnaire survey was mailed to 337 secondary schools in the state of Florida. The returns of that survey revealed that Psychology was taught as a separate course of study in 179 of these schools. (See Stahl (1976) for more details of the Florida study.) Where appropriate, data from this study are incorporated into this report and are discussed in the following pages.

School Characteristics

The responses of the 35 Mississippi teachers who taught the course revealed these courses were offered primarily in public secondary schools (23 responses or 65.7%) with nonreligious private schools (8 responses or 22.9%), private religious schools (2 responses or 5.7%), and a Catholic parochial school and a school for delinquent boys (each with 1 response or 2.9%) following in that order. In other words, approximately two-thirds of all separate psychology courses were taught in public secondary schools.

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[1]Percentages in this chapter and throughout this report are based upon the total number of respondents who responded to the item and not upon the total number of respondents who had the opportunity to respond.

The 35 teachers taught their courses in schools with dissimilar total school enrollments, racial mixtures, and rural-suburban-urban settings. The data describing each of these school characteristics are reported below.

When the responses of the teachers regarding the size of their school's student enrollment were tabulated, the data revealed 10 teachers each (28.6%) taught in secondary schools with student enrollments of between 150 and 350 and between 501 and 1,000 students. Courses were also offered in schools with enrollments of between 1,000 and 1,500 students which ranked third with 7 responses (20.0%) with schools enrolling less than 150 students and between 351 and 500 students tied for fourth place with 3 responses each (8.6%). Schools with more than 1,500 students ranked sixth with 2 responses (5.7%). These data primarily reflect the large number of Mississippi secondary schools with small student enrollments. They are not meant to be interpreted as inferring that smaller schools more frequently than larger ones have purposefully added the separate psychology course to their existing curriculum. These data suggest that required courses (e.g., American History) do operate to restrain the development and inclusion of separate psychology courses within most of the state's smaller secondary schools.

Of the 28 teachers who responded to the item concerning the ratio of white to black students attending their school, 9 teachers (32.1%) indicated they taught in schools with a racial balance of approximately 65% white and 35% black. Eight teachers each (28.6%) taught in schools with racial mixtures of either 95% white/5% black or 80% white/20% black. Two teachers taught in schools with an approximate 35%/65% white-black ratio, and 1 teacher (3.6%) taught in a school with a 50%/50% white-black ratio. Seven teachers failed to indicate the racial mixture of their schools.

A plurality of the teachers, 16 or 45.7%, taught in secondary schools whose geographic and social setting were predominantly rural in nature. Twelve teachers (34.3%) taught in urban schools while 7 respondents (19.5%) indicated their schools drew students from suburban settings. These data, as with those regarding school size, largely reflect the predominant rural location of Mississippi's nearly 400 secondary schools. For example, of the state's 150 public school districts, only 12 (8.0%) are located in areas with a population in excess of 25,000 people.

In contrast to the Florida study, Mississippi teachers taught in schools with much smaller student populations located in more rural areas than did their Florida counterparts. Both groups of teachers taught primarily in public secondary schools and in schools with largely white student populations. The two variables where these teachers differed the most are largely the product of the extreme population differences found in these two states.

Course Characteristics

Data were collected relative to the length of time the specific course in psychology was offered. By far the most frequent response showed that 27 schools (77.1%) offered one semester-length courses. The only other length where responses were recorded was the year-long course option which received 8 responses (22.9%). There appears to be a definite effort to offer semester long courses in psychology while at the same time offering no courses of less than a semester in length. In Mississippi, year-long courses are the only alternative to semester-length psychology courses.

When asked if the specific course in psychology was offered as an elective or required course at their schools, 33 of the 35 respondents (94.3%) indicated the former. Two teachers (5.7%) reported the course was required for graduation from their respective schools. In addition, both of these required course teachers were from private schools.

When asked to indicate the number of sections of Psychology they taught each day, the data from the 34 teachers responding to this item revealed 22 teachers (64.7%) taught one section, 10 teachers (29.4%) taught two sections, and 2 teachers (5.8%) taught three sections per day. In total, these 34 teachers reported teaching a total of 48 sections each day, or an average of 1.41 sections per teacher per day. And, although 22 teachers representing nearly two-thirds of the 35 teachers taught 1 section per day, 12 other teachers taught a greater percentage of the total number of courses taught each day (i.e., 26 of the 48 sections or 54.2%). One teacher did not report the number of sections taught each day.

In examining the above data, one pattern characteristic of this course offering suggests itself. In an effort to open the course for more students, the smaller schools appear to have offered the one semester-length psychology course at the rate of one section per semester while schools with larger enrollments and more curriculum flexibility could and did offer both longer length courses and more sections per term than did their smaller school counterparts. These data reveal some slight relationship among school size, length of time the course is offered, and the number of sections of the course offered per term.

According to the data reported by these teachers in reference to enrollment in their courses, 1,699 students took the separate psychology course for credit in 1975-76. This figure represents an increase of 137% over the total of 717 students reported by these teachers as having taken similar courses during 1974-75.[2] In addition, the 163

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[2]Information received from the Mississippi State Department of Education reported that official student enrollment in separate Psychology courses for 1974-75 was 734 students.

nonpsychology course respondents indicated 40 students had enrolled in "psychology-related" courses in their schools during 1974-75 with this figure increasing to 709 students during 1975-76.

Computed another way, 1,354 students (79.6%) were enrolled in the 23 public schools offering Psychology while 345 (20.4%) were enrolled in the 12 private schools offering similar courses. These findings when converted reveal the average public school offering a separate psychology course enrolled 58.8 students in these courses over the 1975-76 school year as compared to 28.8 students enrolled in these courses offered in private schools.

And finally, when the student enrollment data were examined relative to the length of the course, they revealed that 1,442 students (86.4%) were enrolled in the 27 schools whose course offerings lasted one semester while 257 students took psychology in the 8 schools offering the course for a full year.

Class Characteristics

Information pertaining to the grade level of the students enrolled in these courses was obtained. Courses open to only ninth, tenth, or eleventh graders were not offered in any school. Six teachers (17.1%) indicated their courses were open to just twelfth graders. The grade combinations which received the most responses were the eleventh-and-twelfth grades (20 responses or 57.1%) and the tenth-through-twelfth grades (8 responses or 22.9%). One teacher reported the grade levels of ninth through twelfth were eligible for enrolling in the psychology course offered in that particular school. These figures represent a tendency of schools to enroll primarily seniors and then juniors with approximately 1 of 5 schools also allowing tenth graders to enroll in the course.

The pattern of grade level enrollments described above is similar to that found among Florida secondary schools in 1972-73 and 1974-75 (Stahl, 1976; Stahl and Casteel, 1973, 1975). This pattern was interpreted as meaning the psychology course was seeking a niche in the curriculums of that state's secondary school programs. Furthermore, the student grade level combinations at this level of the curriculum suggested that Psychology as a separate course offering competed with American History, Problems of Democracy, World History, and other social studies courses for the attention of eleventh and twelfth graders who were required to take these particular courses in order to graduate from their respective schools.

The findings relative to the sexual make-up of the psychology classes indicated that in nearly three-fourths

of the schools, 26 schools or 74.5%, the majority of the students in these courses were girls. Two teachers (14.3%) reported a majority of the students enrolled in their courses were boys while 4 teachers (11.4%) reported evenly balanced female-male class enrollments.

Fifteen of the 32 teachers (46.9%) responding to the item describing the racial composition of their own psychology classes reported that they taught classes which had a racial mixture of approximately 95% white and 5% black. This finding alone suggests that in almost one-half of all psychology courses taught in Mississippi secondary schools, the student enrollment is approximately 19 whites to 1 black regardless of the white-black ratio of the total school enrollment. The second most frequently indicated ratio of whites to blacks enrolled in these courses was 65% white/35% black and 20% white/80% black with 5 responses each (15.6%). The 80% white/20% black was fourth (4 responses or 12.5%) and the 50%/50% white-black ratio was fifth (3 responses or 9.4%). No teacher indicated classes of the 35% white/65% black ratio as included in the questionnaire. Collectively, 75.0% of the psychology classes enrolled at least 20 white students for each 10 black students with 62.5% of these classes enrolling 19 whites for each black student.

The Florida results were nearly identical to the findings of the Mississippi study regarding the grade levels, racial composition, and sexual make-up of the enrollments in these separate psychology courses.

Popularity of the Course

The respondents were asked to indicated whether the separate psychology course was considered a popular course for students to take at their school. Of the 33 teachers marking this item of the questionnaire, 28 (87.5%) answered in the affirmative.

In another item related to the popularity of the course, respondents were asked whether student demand for their psychology course(s) had increased, decreased, or remained approximately the same over the past two or three years. In schools where specific courses in psychology were offered, 18 of the 26 teachers (69.2%) who responded to this item indicated that demand for the course had risen over this period. For most, the demand has risen sharply. Eight teachers (30.8%) indicated a fairly stable demand while no teacher reported a decrease. Of the 163 respondents in the schools not offering separate psychology courses, only 12 decided to mark a response to this item. Of this total, 7 (58.3%) indicated an increase in student demand for the course; 3 (25.0%) indicated a steady demand for such courses; and 2 (16.7%) reported the demand had

decreased for separate psychology courses in their schools over the past two or three years.

Course Objectives, Content, and Methods

Information was also obtained relative to the objectives set for the course by these teachers, the topics which were included in their courses, and the general methods the teachers used while teaching their students.

The teachers were asked to identify the objectives they set for teaching their courses at the secondary school level. This item of the questionnaire allowed teachers to check any number of 12 objectives already provided and included an invitation to add other objectives should those provided be inappropriate. The 35 teachers marked an average of 7.88 objectives each (see Table 1). The three objectives most frequently set for these courses among the 12 listed were:

(a) to help students better understand and accept themselves as individuals (32 responses or 91.4%);

(b) to help students understand and deal with their personal problems (31 responses or 88.6%); and,

(c) to assist students in adjusting to life and solving life's problems (29 responses or 82.9%).

The three objectives least supported by these teachers were:

(a) to help students in their vocational planning (10 responses or 28.6%);

(b) to assist students in understanding the vocabulary associated with psychology (15 responses or 42.9%); and,

(c) to prepare students for college psychology courses (17 responses or 48.6%).

The only "other" objectives cited by these teachers were "to assist student understanding of mental illness and retardation" and "to assist students to understand the learning process."

In contrast, 179 Florida psychology teachers ranked the objectives rated first, second, and third by these Mississippi teachers as second, first, and third among the identical list of 12 objectives. This pattern of similar rankings assigned the same objectives is maintained throughout the list of the 12 objectives (r_s (22) = .91, $p < .001$). These two groups of teachers also agreed upon the exact same objectives and the same rank level for their last three objectives (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

Objectives Cited For Separate Psychology Courses As Indicated By 35 Mississippi and 179 Florida Psychology Teachers

Objectives	1975-76 Mississippi Psychology Teachers F	%	R	1974-75 Florida Psychology Teachers F	%	%
a. To help students better understand and accept themselves as individuals	32	91.4	1	154	86.0	2
b. To help students understand and deal with their personal problems	31	88.6	2	162	90.5	1
c. To assist students in adjusting to life and solving life's problems	29	82.9	3	149	83.2	3
d. To apply psychological knowledge to understand contemporary social problems and events	26	74.3	4	113	63.1	6.5
e. To help develop an appreciation for psychology as a field of scientific knowledge	25	71.4	6	111	62.0	8
f. To help students cope with problems associated with emerging adolescence	25	71.4	6	120	67.0	5
g. To assist students in developing a basic psychology of life	25	71.4	6	121	67.6	4
h. To eliminate many of the misconceptions students have about psychology and psychologists	23	65.7	8	109	60.9	9
i. To assist students in preparing for family life	18	51.4	9	113	63.1	6.5
j. To prepare students for college psychology courses	17	48.6	10	102	57.0	10
k. To assist students in understanding the vocabulary associated with psychology	15	42.9	11	101	56.5	11
l. To help students in their vocational planning	10	28.6	12	44	24.6	12
m. Other	1	-	-	19	10.6	-

NOTE: The rank-order correlation coefficient for these two sets of data is .91 ($p < .001$). The $\Sigma d^2 = 24.5(12)$

A list of 22 topics generally covered in psychology courses on the precollege level was presented in the questionnaire. The respondents were invited to indicate all of those topics which they included in their courses (see Table 2). The 35 teachers checked an average of 14.0 topics each.

The five topics included most often in courses taught by these teachers were personality theory (32 responses or 91.4%), social behavior (31 responses or 88.6%), mental illness (29 responses or 82.9%), emotions (28 responses or 80.0%), and drugs, alcoholism, etc. (27 responses or 77.1%). The four topics studied least often in these separate psychology courses were statistics (6 responses or 17.1%), child care (9 responses or 25.7%), the human body-physiology (13 responses or 37.1%), and parapsychology, esp (17 responses or 48.6%).

The 1975-76 Mississippi teachers and the 1974-75 Florida teachers were very close in their agreement as to the content and topics they included within their respective courses (r_s (22) = .92, $p < .001$). [For an examination of their comparative rankings, see Table 2.] These rankings reveal that the psychology courses taught by these two sets of teachers included approximately the same topics and content at about the identical level of priority. However, these data do not reveal the qualitative nature of these courses in terms of how well, how much, and how long these topics were studied in the different classrooms represented in this report.

An item was also included seeking information as to the topics and content these teachers believed should be included in psychology courses taught on the secondary school level. The respondents were invited to select from a list of the same 22 topics presented earlier all the topics that should be included in these courses. These individuals also had the option of adding other topics if the ones provided were not sufficient for their needs.

Three of the four topics previously identified as the topics most often covered in psychology courses taught by these teachers were checked as topics these teachers thought most ought to be included in these courses. The three topics, personality theory (32 responses or 91.4%), social behavior (30 responses or 85.7%), and emotions (29 responses or 82.9%), which ranked first, second, and third among topics which should be included were ranked first, second, and fourth, respectively, as topics which these teachers included in their courses (See Table 3). The greatest difference in rankings was found for the topic learning and thinking. This topic was ranked in position 6.5 among topics which these teachers indicated should be included in these courses and only position 13.5 among the topics these same teachers actually included in their courses. Otherwise, the degree of similarity between these two groups of responses is extremely high (r_s (22) = .93, $p < .001$).

TABLE 2

A Comparison of the Topics and Content Included in Psychology Courses Taught by the 35 Mississippi and 179 Florida Psychology Teachers

Topics	Mississippi Psychology Teachers F	%	R	Florida Psychology Teachers F	%	R
a. Personality theory	32	91.4	1	157	87.7	1
b. Social behavior	31	88.6	2	142	79.3	5
c. Mental illness	29	82.9	3	156	87.2	2
d. Emotion	28	80.0	4	149	83.2	3
e. Drugs, alcoholism, etc.	27	77.1	5	122	68.2	9
f. Intelligence	26	74.3	8	138	77.1	6
g. Motivation	26	74.3	8	129	72.1	8
h. Mental health	26	74.3	8	148	82.7	4
i. The adolescent	26	74.3	8	119	66.5	10
j. Abnormal behavior	26	74.3	8	125	75.4	7
k. Love	25	71.4	11	104	58.1	14
l. Growth and development	24	68.6	12	105	58.7	13
m. Mental retardation	22	62.9	13.5	100	55.9	15
n. Learning and thinking	22	62.9	13.5	116	64.8	11
o. Marriage and the family	20	57.1	15	91	50.8	19
p. Heredity and genetics	19	54.3	16	94	52.5	18
q. Sensation and perception	18	51.4	17.5	96	53.6	17
r. History of psychology	18	51.4	17.5	99	55.3	16
s. Parapsychology, esp	17	48.6	19	115	64.2	12
t. Human body-physiology	13	37.1	20	54	30.2	21
u. Child care	9	25.7	21	59	33.0	20
v. Statistics	6	17.1	22	33	18.4	22

NOTE: The rank-order correlation coefficient for these two sets of data is .92 ($p < .001$). The $\Sigma d^2 = 145(22)$.

TABLE 3

Comparison of The Topics The Mississippi Teachers Believed Should Be Included In Psychology Courses With The Topics They Already Included in Their Courses

Topics	Topics Believed Should Be Included in These Psychology Courses F	%	R	Topics Actually Included in Courses Taught by These Teachers F	%	R
a. Personality theory	32	91.4	1	32	91.4	1
b. Social behavior	30	85.7	2	31	88.6	2
c. Emotions	29	82.9	3	28	80.0	4
d. Mental illness	28	80.0	6.5	29	82.9	3
e. Drugs, alcoholism, etc.	28	80.0	6.5	27	77.1	5
f. Intelligence	28	80.0	6.5	26	74.3	8
g. The adolescent	28	80.0	6.5	26	74.3	8
h. Abnormal behavior	28	80.0	6.5	26	74.3	8
i. Learning and thinking	28	80.0	6.5	22	62.9	13.5
j. Mental health	27	77.1	10	26	74.3	8
k. Motivation	26	74.3	12	26	74.3	8
l. Growth and development	26	74.3	12	24	68.6	12
m. Marriage and the family	26	74.3	12	20	57.1	15
n. Love	25	71.4	14	25	71.4	11
o. Mental retardation	23	65.7	15	22	62.9	13.5
p. Sensation and perception	22	62.9	16.5	18	51.4	17.5
q. History of psychology	22	62.9	16.5	18	51.4	17.5
r. Parapsychology, esp.	21	60.0	18	16	48.6	19
s. Heredity and genetics	20	57.1	19.5	19	54.3	16
t. Human body-physiology	20	57.1	19.5	13	37.1	20
u. Child care	14	40.0	21	9	25.7	21
v. Statistics	9	25.7	22	6	17.1	22

NOTE: The rank-order correlation coefficient for these two sets of data is .93 ($p < .001$). The $\Sigma d^2 = 726(22)$.

Other topics mentioned by these teachers as relevant to their courses and which should be included in these courses are "dreams," "self acceptance," "hypnosis," "sexuality," "sex roles," and "sexual behavior" (all with 1 response each).

Besides being concerned with the ojbectives for these courses and the content studied by the students, the survey sought information relative to the specific methods these teachers employed in trying to achieve their instructional objectives. Five specific methods were listed along with space for adding other methods these teachers might have used.

Far and away the most popular method used by these teachers was lecture-discussion (31 responses or 88.6%). Tied for a distant second were the methods text-and-lecture and discussion (each with 20 responses or 57.1%). In fourth position was the laboratory experiment method (7 responses or 20.0%) with fifth place taken by the lecture-demonstration method (5 responses or 14.3%).

Thirteen teachers identified "other" methods were employed in addition to those listed in the questionnaire. These "other" methods were small group work (3 responses), field trips and guest speakers (2 responses each), and panel discussions, tests, inquiry, films, audio-visual aids, research papers, textbook readings, stories in literature, and peer group teaching in elementary school classes (1 response each).

In review, these data reveal that while trying to attain their respective course objectives Mississippi psychology teachers used many diverse methodologies in presenting students psychological information. However, these data provide no estimate of the qualitative nature of these methods as they were employed within these various courses.

Use of State-Adopted Textbooks

As expected, a large number of the 35 teachers used at least one of the state-adopted psychology textbooks in teaching their courses. With 31 of the 35 teachers responding, 25 teachers (80.6%) indicated they used these textbooks in teaching their courses.

More specifically, 13 of the 29 teachers (44.8%) who revealed the text they used indicated they used the Engle and Snellgrove text entitled Psychology: Its principles and applications. Psychology: Understanding ourselves and others, by Tallent and Spungin, was used by 7 teachers (24.1%) with Psychology for you by Gordon third with 4 responses (13.8%), Introduction to the behavioral sciences by Sandberg and Fenton fourth with 3 responses (10.3%),

and Psychology for living by Sorenson fifth with 2 responses (6.9%). Ten teachers failed to indicate their textbook or revealed they did not use one of the texts listed. Four teachers reported they used more than one of these textbooks.

When these teachers were asked to identify the extent to which they actually used the textbook in their classes and when assigning students reading material, 12 teachers (36.4%) revealed they used these texts "a great deal," 11 teachers (33.3%) reported they used these textbooks "often;" 8 teachers (24.2%) reported they used these textbooks "occasionally;" and 2 teachers (6.1%) revealed they "never or rarely" used these state-adopted textbooks. Most remarkably, no teacher reported s/he used these textbooks for lack of any other available printed or textual material. However, when asked whether they preferred a different kind of textbook, 7 teachers (20.0%) answered in the affirmative.

Need for Audio-Visual Instructional Aids

When asked whether they felt a need for more audio-visual materials and instructional resources to help them do a more adequate job of teaching their psychology courses, 31 of the teachers (91.2%) indicated they desired more of these kinds of aids. Only 3 teachers (8.8%) reported they felt no such need. However, all 35 teachers reported they definitely would use more audiovisual and other instructional aids if such materials were made available to them. These data reveal that these teachers not only desired more appropriate and a wide variety of instructional aids, they also reveal that if such materials were made available to them to be used, these teachers would indeed use them.

In an effort to identify the exact types of materials these teachers wanted to see made available to them for their use, the questionnaire listed 15 different categories of materials for these teachers to indicate their preferences. The materials most desired by these teachers were films (29 responses or 82.9%), filmstrips (25 responses or 71.4%), and simulation games (23 responses or 65.7%). The materials least wanted by these teachers were materials for slow learners (6 responses or 17.1%), a different kind of textbook (7 responses or 20.0%), and posters of famous psychologists (10 responses or 28.6%). The responses of these teachers regarding all 15 of these materials are provided in Table 4. The 35 teachers averaged 7.46 selections each. The one other type of material identified as being wanted was "personality tests."

Equally relevant to the needs of these teachers was a separate question to investigate whether the schools of the school district in which they worked had available a specific curriculum guide for psychology courses for these teachers to use. Eight teachers (24.2%) indicated their schools had a written curriculum guide for the course; 1 teacher (3.0%)

TABLE 4

The Types of Additional Materials and Instructional Resources
The Mississippi and Florida Teachers Wanted To See Made Available
For Their Use In Teaching Their Psychology Courses

Types of Materials	Mississippi Teachers F	%	R	Florida Teachers F	%	R
a. Films	29	82.9	1	125	69.8	2
b. Filmstrips	25	71.4	2	105	58.7	4
c. Simulation games	23	65.7	3	121	67.6	3
d. Materials for classroom experiments	22	62.9	4.5	130	72.6	1
e. Newsletter for teachers	22	62.9	4.5	71	39.7	9
f. Overhead transparencies	21	60.0	6.5	85	47.5	6
g. Audio-cassette tapes	21	60.0	6.5	84	46.9	7
h. A curriculum guide	20	57.1	8	58	32.4	10
i. Career-related pamphlets	16	45.7	9	48	26.8	13
j. Value sheets	13	37.1	11	72	40.2	8
k. Student workbooks	13	37.1	11	96	53.6	5
l. A reference service for students	13	37.1	11	54	30.2	11.5
m. Posters of famous psychologists	10	28.6	13	44	24.6	15
n. A different kind of textbook	7	20.0	14	54	30.2	11.5
o. Materials for slow learners	6	17.1	15	46	25.7	14
	$\bar{X}$ = 7.46(N=35)			$\bar{X}$ = 6.7(N=179)		

NOTE: The rank-order correlation coefficient for these two sets of data is .77 ($p < .01$). The $\Sigma d^2 = 114.5(15)$.

reported the county school district office had available such a guide; while 24 teachers (72.7%) reported neither their school or district school board office possessed a curriculum guide for their psychology courses. Of the 163 respondents not teaching the course, 4 indicated their schools and 5 reported their school district offices had guides available for the course.

In review of these data relative to instructional aids and resources, the findings suggest that Mississippi's psychology teachers are doing the best they can in light of having to develop and implement a course and to select audiovisual aids without specific state, school district, and/or school curriculum guidelines in which to follow. These teachers not only desire to have more materials to assist them in their courses, but have indicated that if they were made available to them, they would use these materials. Furthermore, they did not hesitate to specify the exact types of instructional resources they would like to have access to for use in their own courses. Whether or not these teachers would actually use these materials were they made available can only be speculated.

Teacher Characteristics

Information pertaining to the subject area of certification and college preparation of these psychology teachers was obtained. As expected, Social Studies certificates were held by 18 of the teachers (52.9%). Guidance and Counseling certificates were held by 5 teachers (14.7%) with Science (2 responses or 5.9%) and Administration (1 response or 2.9%) certified teachers following in that order. Eight teachers indicated they held licenses in fields other than those specifically identified in the questionnaire and were certified by the Mississippi Department of Education in other areas. When their responses were analyzed, the responses revealed these eight teachers held certificated in Psychology (2 responses) and Business Education, Art, English, Mathematics, School Psychology, and Speech (1 response each). One teacher failed to respond to this item of the questionnaire.

Even though certification requirements have been specifically identified by the State Department of Education, in Mississippi, as in most other states, a teacher could (and still can) teach psychology courses on the precollege level without possessing a certificate in this discipline area and without having had a psychology course in college. However, the findings which reveal the diverse background of these teachers suggest that administrators and teachers alike perceive the course primarily as a social studies rather than a science-oriented course and that social studies teachers are most likely to be the teachers assigned to teach the psychology courses.

More than one-third of the teachers, 13 or 37.1%, reported they held a bachelor's degree. Eight teachers (22.9%) had completed some course work beyond the bachelor's degree but had not as yet completed a masters degree program. Seven teachers (20.0%) held the masters degree only, while 3 teachers (8.6%) had completed some course work beyond this degree level short of a specialist or doctorate degree. Two teachers had attained the specialist degree and two the doctorate. These findings reveal that 60.0% of Mississippi's precollege psychology teachers had training at less than the masters degree level.

In examining the number of hours the 35 teachers had accumulated in psychology and educational psychology courses at either the undergraduate or graduate level, the data indicate these teachers averaged 26.2 semester hours of college course preparation (s.d. = 27.2). However, this figure is misleading as a representative figure for this entire group of teachers. The amount of their college course background ranged from a low of 0 hours (1 respondent) to a high of 150 hours (1 respondent) with a mode of 12 hours (5 respondents). In total, these 35 teachers had accumulated 918 college credit hours in psychology and educational psychology courses. If one withdrew the one teacher with 150 semester hours (an individual with a doctorate as well as having been ordained into the ministry), the 34 remaining teachers averaged 22.6 semester hours of psychology--a figure much more representative of this group of teachers. By comparison, the survey of 179 Florida psychology teachers in 1975 found a mean of 21.8 semester hours for these teachers.

Of the 35 teachers, 33 responded to the item regarding their attitude about their college course preparation. A majority of these teachers, 25 or 75.8%, reported they felt they had enough college preparation to teach psychology adequately to their high school students. Eight teachers (24.2%) felt less confident about their training. These teachers did not consider their college course training adequate enough for teaching the psychology course or psychological subject matter.

These findings are indicative of the fact that secondary school administrators are staffing these separate psychology courses with individuals who believe they have the training to teach these courses to high school level students. They further suggest that administrators are opening up separate psychology courses when they can locate such individuals and when their curriculums allow for the offering of new elective courses. Interestingly, when asked if they felt they had enough college course work to teach psychology adequately at the secondary school level, 48.9% of the 163 respondents not teaching such courses responded affirmatively.

In addition, the teachers were asked whether the approach they took towards their course tended to be "behavioristic" or

"humanistic" in orientation. Of the 33 teachers who responded to this item, 16 (48.5%) reported their approach was best characterized as being "humanistic" while 15 respondents (45.1%) revealed the "behavioristic" label was more appropriate to describe their approach to the course. Two teachers (6.1%) refused to make a choice between these two labels and indicated their approaches were combinations of these two orientations, i.e., "eclectic."

Despite the fact that neither of these two terms or labels were defined for the respondents, these teachers appeared to have no difficulty labeling their approach with one of these two labels. What specifically these teachers meant by "humanism" and "behaviorism"--or, more aptly, humanistic and behavioristic--is unknown. This researcher did not expect to find the near 50-50 split between these teachers along these two labels as what occurred.

Content courses identified as including "psychological" subject matter were Home Economics (28 responses), Family Life (26 responses), Problems of Democracy and Sociology (17 responses each), Senior Social Studies (15 responses), Child Development (9 responses), and Contemporary Issues (6 responses). The choice labeled "other" courses besides the 7 just mentioned received 15 responses and included such courses as The Humanities (2 responses), Religion (2 responses), and Drug Education, Health, Religious Formation, English, Business Education, and The Behavioral Sciences (1 response each). In summary, the 100 respondents to this item identified 133 various courses in their schools' curriculums besides the separate psychology courses which presented this content to students. Several of these respondents indicated more than one course in their school included this subject matter content.

These findings would suggest that individuals in many secondary schools have made an effort to incorporate "psychology" into various courses within their curriculums. One may interpret these data such that they indicate a concerted effort on the part of many schools to deliberately incorporate as much psychology as possible into existing course offerings, especially when they were not able to offer separate courses in psychology to their students. However, again the question of what content was included, how long it was taught, how well it was covered, and how accurate it was as they reflect the quality of the "psychology" included in these courses remain unanswered. Thirty-one of the 35 psychology teachers indicated that psychological principles and information were being included in other courses at their schools as well as in their own separate courses. Whether these "other" courses were primarily the other courses taught by these very same teachers is unknown.

Mississippi Teachers and the APA

The respondents were asked whether or not they were aware of the American Psychological Associations' Human Behavior Curriculum Project (HBCP sponsored by the National Science Foundation-NSF).[3] The project was designed to develop 30 instructional modules for use in precollege psychology and behavioral science courses and units. Of the 34 psychology teachers responding to this item, only 5 (14.7%) reported they were aware of the project. Of the 102 nonpsychology teachers responding, only 7 (6.9%) indicated they had heard of HBCP. These data would suggest that these Mississippi teachers were highly uninformed about APA activities designed to assist them with their courses. Whether this situation is due to the fact that the APA did not go far enough in their efforts to inform these teachers of the existence of the project or the channels for communicating information about HBCP used by the APA were inappropriate to reach psychology teachers in this particular state is uncertain. Regardless of the reason, more than 80% of the state's 35 psychology teachers were unaware of the APA's efforts to assist them with their psychology courses.

Among the most surprising information uncovered by this questionnaire survey was that concerning the number of teachers who received copies of the APA newsletter, Periodically. Despite the fact this newsletter has been available free of charge since 1969, only 1 teacher in the entire state received this publication during 1975-76. This individual was (is) a psychology teacher. Three psychology teachers (8.6%) indicated they did not receive Periodically while 30 (88.2%) reported they would like to begin receiving this newsletter. Of equal importance, 57 of the 107 nonpsychology teachers responding to this item indicated they wanted to begin receiving this newsletter. By September, 1976, all these teachers had received information as to how to add their names to the Periodically mailing list.

Mississippi Teachers and the MCSS

The psychology teachers were asked if they were members of the Mississippi Council for the Social Studies (MCSS). Only 1 (3.0%) of the 33 teachers responded in the affirmative with 16 others (48.5%) indicating they desired information on how to join this professional organization. Eight

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[3] At the time this survey was conducted, the HBCP was being funded by NSF. However, at the time of this writing, NSF had notified the APA the Project would not receive funding to continue its work.

of the 91 nonpsychology teachers (8.8%) revealed they were members of the MCSS while another 27 respondents from this group (29.7%) reported they also wanted information on how to join this particular professional organization.

The responses of these teachers regarding their interest in joining the Mississippi Council for the Social Studies would suggest this organization is seen as one avenue by which these teachers and other teachers might obtain additional information useful for teaching psychology as well as assistance in developing, improving, and/or assessing the psychology courses offered on the precollege level.

The Offering of Psychology Courses in Other Schools

Probably the most exciting set of responses was from the 163 schools not currently offering separate courses in psychology. These respondents were asked if they were interested in beginning a course in psychology in their respective schools. Of the 96 individuals responding to this item, 73 (76.0%) reported that if they could obtain information to help them do so, they were definitely interested in offering the course in their schools. Only 23 respondents (24.0%) reported they definitely were not interested in such a course. In addition, 67 respondents failed to make a choice on this item. This information reveals that individuals in at least 73 of the 340 Mississippi secondary schools not currently offering separate psychology courses are interested in beginning such a course in their schools.

If nothing else, the findings reported above reveal that Psychology is seen as a legitimate course of study for students in this state by the individual most responsible for making these decisions, i.e., teachers and principals. What is now needed are ways of assisting these individuals to set up the courses they want to establish in their own schools.

REVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

Of the 375 secondary schools in Mississippi, only a little more than half (52.8%) responded to this questionnaire survey. If the 35 schools reporting they taught a separate psychology course were the only schools in the state offering such courses, then only 1 out of 10 (9.3%) secondary schools in the state offer this course. Furthermore, 65.7% of the existing schools offering the course were public high schools.

In addition to the above information, the results of the survey revealed that:

(a) 57.2% of the schools offering such courses had enrollments of between 150 and 350 and between 501 and 1,000 students;

(b) 89.3% of these schools enrolled approximately 2 whites to 1 black student or higher in favor of a more white composition of the overall student enrollment;

(c) 45.7% of these schools were located in rural settings with another 34.3% located in urban areas;

(d) 77.1% of these schools offered one semester-length courses while the remaining schools offered one year long courses;

(e) 64.7% of these 35 schools offered only one section of psychology per term to their students;

(f) 94.3% of these 35 schools offered psychology as an elective course;

(g) 1,699 students took the separate psychology course for credit during the 1975-76 year compared to 717 students enrolled in similar courses for the previous year;

(h) 57.1% of the courses were open only to eleventh and twelfth grades combined;

(i) 74.3% of the courses enrolled primarily female students;

(j) 46.9% of the courses enrolled whites and blacks at the ratio of 19 whites to every 1 black student;

(k) 87.5% of the 35 teachers thought the course was considered a popular one for their students to take;

(l) 91.4% of the teachers selected the objective to help students better understand and accept themselves as individuals as the most frequently set goal for offering the course;

(m) 91.4% of the teachers selected the topic personality theory making it the most frequently covered topic in their courses;

(n) 88.6% of the teachers used the lecture-discussion method making it the most often used method employed to teach the course;

(o) 80.6% of the teachers used at least one of the five state-adopted textbooks;

(p) 44.8% of the teachers used the Engle-Snellgrove text, Psychology: Its principles and application, making it the most frequently used psychology

textbook in the state;

(q) 52.9% of the teachers were certified in the area of the social studies;

(r) 40.0% of the teachers had earned the masters degree or had completed work beyond this degree level;

(s) 26.2 semester credit hours in college level psychology courses were earned, on the average, by these teachers;

(t) 75.8% of the 35 teachers felt they were adequately prepared to teach the psychology to their students;

(u) 48.5% of the teachers labeled the approach they took to the course as "humanistic" in nature;

(v) 91.2% of the teachers reported they needed more audiovisual instructional resources to help them with their courses;

(w) 100.0% of these teachers reported they would use these materials if they were made available to them;

(x) 82.9% of the teachers selected the aid films making it the most frequently desired type of aid needed to help them with their courses;

(y) 14.7% of the teachers were aware of the APA's Human Behavior Curriculum Project - a project designed to help them with their psychology courses; and

(z) 76.0% of the respondents from schools not currently offering the course indicated a desire to offer such courses to their students.

Needless to say, these data describe a course which is offered in a wide variety of schools, taught by a diverse group of teachers, and characterized by different objectives, content, and methods. Finally, in all respects, these figures represent only quantitative findings and in no way describe the qualitative nature of any of the areas covered by this survey.

Finally, the similarity of the Mississippi and Florida teacher data cannot be overstressed. In comparing these sets of data, the differences found are primarily associated with the size of these state's student populations and with the "ruralness" of Mississippi as contrasted with the "urban-suburbanness" of Florida. Except for those two factors, there is not a great deal of difference between the types of psychology courses taught in the secondary schools of these two Southern states. That this degree of similarity existed was an unexpected finding of this comparative study.

PART II

NOW, THE STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

A status report of teachers provides certain kinds of information about the nature of the student population which enroll in these Psychology courses. But such studies of teachers do not provide us with detailed information relative to their students. From teacher studies we do not know why students enroll in Psychology courses, what topics they believe should be taught, and what media they believe should be used by their teachers to teach them Psychology. In fact, we acquire very little information as to the sex, race, or age of these students from teacher questionnaire surveys.

In an effort to get information directly from the students, Stahl (1976) surveyed 1,215 students enrolled in Psychology courses in Florida schools during 1974-75. This student survey was repeated in Mississippi in 1975-76. This part of the report presents the Mississippi student survey results, and where appropriate, it compares these results with the teacher data and with the Florida student data.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

All 35 teachers who taught separate psychology courses were asked if they would allow their students to be surveyed as well. Each teacher received a brief letter explaining the nature of the student survey, a sample copy of the two-page, 9-item student questionnaire, and a stamped, self-addressed return postcard on which s/he was to indicate the total number of student questionnaires s/he needed. The request to conduct the student survey was mailed to the teacher within one week of the receipt of the teacher's completed questionnaire. Whenever possible, the appropriate number of student surveys and a self-addressed, stamped return envelope was mailed to the teacher within 24 hours of the receipt of her/his completed postcard.

RESULTS

Introduction to the Returns

Of the 23 public school teachers receiving requests to survey their students, 15 (65.2%) returned completed postcards asking for a total of 704 student questionnaires. If all these survey forms had been completed, then 52.0% of the 1,354 public school students taking psychology would

have been surveyed. Thirteen teachers returned 507 completed student questionnaires. These 507 student responses represent 37.4% of the 1,354 public school student total. Meanwhile, of the 12 private school teachers surveyed, 10 (83.3%) agreed to survey their students. Of these, 9 returned 217 completed questionnaires. These 217 students represent 62.9% of the 345 private school students who took the course during 1974-75. Thus, 724 of the 1,699 students (42.9%) taking psychology courses in Mississippi high schools during 1975-76 completed the student questionnaire. The results of the analysis of these student data are reported below.

In the Spring of 1975, 26 of the 179 Florida psychology teachers were asked if they would allow their students to be surveyed. These 26 teachers were randomly selected. As described above, the procedures for getting the questionnaire to and from the students were identical to that used in the Mississippi student survey. Twenty-five of the 26 teachers agreed to conduct a survey of their students. In all, these 25 teachers requested 1,309 copies of the student questionnaire. Twenty-four teachers returned 1,215 completed student forms. When and where appropriate, the Florida student findings will be discussed below as well.

Characteristics of the Mississippi Psychology Students

Included in the student questionnaire were four items designed to gather descriptive data relative to the sex, race, age, and grade level of each respondent. Information was also sought as to the letter grade each student earned in the psychology course for the previous grading term (see Figure 1).

(A) Sex of students

Although 26 of the 35 teachers indicated their classes consisted of a majority of females, no data were available in these psychology courses. As expected from the teacher data, females did make up a majority of the student population sampled in the 1975-76 survey. Of the 724 students, 458 or 63.5%, were female with the remaining students, 263 or 36.5%, being male. If these percentages are indicative of the female-male ratio in separate psychology classrooms, then of the 1,699 student total, 1079 were female. By contrast, 58.6% of the Florida students completing a similar survey in 1974-75 indicated they were females.

The 'typical' female psychology student was white, in the twelfth grade, 17 years of age, and equally likely to have received an "A" or "B" in Psychology during the previous grading term. Likewise, the 'typical' male was white, in the twelfth grade, 17 years of age, and equally likely to have received an "A," "B," or "C" in Psychology for the preceding term. These characteristics are nearly identical to those of students enrolled in psychology courses in Florida during 1974-75 (see Appendix).

Figure 1

A Crosstabulation of Descriptive Data Pertaining to the 724 Mississippi Secondary School Students Who Responded to the 1975-76 Psychology Survey; Frequency Data*

	SEX		RACE			GRADE LEVEL				AGE LEVEL						GRADES EARNED				
	Males	Females	Whites	Blacks	Others	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors	14 Year-Olds	15 Year-Olds	16 Year-Olds	17 Year-Olds	18 Year-Olds	19 Year-Olds	"A" Grades	"B" Grades	"C" Grades	"D" Grades	"E/F" Grades
Males	263	-	204	58	1	7	9	35	212	2	7	25	131	90	7	62	72	65	30	8
Females	-	458	362	93	1	13	18	119	306	13	15	89	223	113	5	154	167	49	21	14
Whites			566	-	-	12	13	131	409	11	12	98	289	144	11	186	191	78	34	12
Blacks				151	-	7	14	23	106	3	10	16	64	57	1	29	47	35	17	10
Other					2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
Freshmen						20	-	-	-	13	5	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Sophomores							27	-	-	2	13	7	4	1	0	2	7	3	7	4
Juniors								155	-	0	3	95	45	11	0	36	52	14	14	4
Seniors									518	0	0	11	305	189	12	177	179	97	30	14
14 Year-Olds										15	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
15 Year-Olds											22	-	-	-	-	3	7	2	3	5
16 Year-Olds												114	-	-	-	28	39	10	9	2
17 Year-Olds													355	-	-	128	121	53	18	7
18 Year-Olds														203	-	54	70	44	18	11
19 Year-Olds															12	3	3	3	3	0
"A" Grades																216	-	-	-	-
"B" Grades																	240	-	-	-
"C" Grades																		112	-	-
"D" Grades																			51	-
"E/F" Grades																				25

*Differences in totals due to students who did not respond to one of these 5 categories of items.

(B) Race of students

When these data were examined according to the race of the students enrolled in these courses, the results were consistent with previous teacher responses. Of the 35 teachers, 24 had a reported moderate-to-heavy white student enrollments in the separate psychology courses. This high percentage of white students was supported by the student returns. A large majority of the 724 students, 566 students or 78.8%, were white. Black students numbered 151 responses (21.0%) while 2 students (.2%) indicated their race was something 'other' than white or black. Using these percentages as estimated, then of the 1,699 students enrolled in Mississippi's psychology courses, 1,338 were white, 357 were black, and 4 were 'other' in respect to racial characteristics.

The 'typical' white student was female, in the twelfth grade, 17 years old, and the recepient of an "A" or "B" grade during the last term in the psychology course. Similarly, the 'typical' black student was female, in the twelfth grade, either 17 or 18 years old, and the recepient of either a "B" or "C" grade in psychology for the previous grading term. These characteristics are parallel to those revealed by the Florida student responses.

(C) Grade levels of students

The teacher data related to the grade level of students enrolled in these classes indicated a heavy senior population. When the results of the student responses were examined, the findings revealed that over two-thirds of the 724 students, 518 or 71.9%, were seniors, with juniors (155 students or 21.5%), sophomores (27 students or 3.8%) and freshmen (20 students or 2.8%) following in that order.

At all grade levels, the typical student was a white female. As might be expected, as the grade level rose, so the age level of the students increased with freshmen primarily 16 years of age, and seniors primarily 17 years of age. Interestingly, seniors were equally likely to have earned an "A" or "B" while juniors where most likely to have received a "B" and sophomores a "B" or "D" in the course for the previous grading period. However, only one of the 20 freshmen taking the course indicated having received a grade in the course. This grade was an "A."

(D) Age levels of students

The results of the student data indicated that one-half of these students (355 responses or 49.2%) were 17 years of age. Eighteen year old students (203 responses or 28.2%) made up the second most numerous age category with 16 year old students (114 responses or 15.8%) third, 15 year old

students (22 responses or 3.1%) fourth, 14 year old students (15 responses or 2.1%) fifth, and 19 year old students (12 responses or 1.7%) sixth. Collectively, 558 of the 724 students (77.1%) responding to this survey were either 17 or 18 years of age. The typical 17 year old student was a white female, a senior, and equally likely to have received an "A" or "B" in psychology for the previous grading term. These data are a carbon copy of the characteristics of the 'typical' 17 year old student as revealed by the Florida student survey.

(E) Academic grades received by students

Each student was also asked to identify the grade s/he received in the psychology course for the previous grading term. Over a third of all grades given by the 22 teachers of these 724 students were "B" grades (240 responses or 37.4%) while an almost equal percentage of students, 33.6% or 216 responses, received an "A" grade. A distant third position was filled by the "C" grade category (112 responses or 17.7%) with "D" grades fourth with 51 responses (8.0%) and "F" grades fifth with 25 responses (3.9%). For whatever reasons, 80 students (11.0% of the 724 students surveyed) failed to indicate the grade they received for the previous grading period. The most plausible explanation for this high number of "no responses" is that these students were in their first term in the psychology course and had not yet received grades for the course.

(F) Summary of student descriptive data

At this time, a composite description of the 'typical' secondary school psychology student in Mississippi can be developed. She is a white, 17 year old senior enrolled in a rural public school psychology course with an enrollment of approximately 25 students. She received an "A" or "B" in her psychology course for the last term. Her psychology course is a one semester-length social studies elective course. Her class of approximately 25 students includes 13 white females, 7 white males, 3 black females, and 2 black males. The majority of her classmates are 17 or 18 year-old seniors with a few juniors and either 1 sophomore or freshman also enrolled. Of these students, about 18 received "A's" or "B's" for the last grading term in this course. Only one of her classmates received a grade of "D" or "F." These data are nearly identical to those found in the student responses from the 1974-75 Florida study. In other words, there exists little difference between the types of students enrolled in psychology courses in Mississippi and Florida high schools.

Course Objectives, Content, and Media

In addition to identifying themselves in terms of the five descriptive categories just mentioned, these students also revealed the reasons why they enrolled in these psychology courses, the topics they believed should be included in these courses, and the types of audiovisual materials they thought should be used by their teachers in order to teach them psychology. In each of these areas of responses, the options provided on the student questionnaire were nearly identical to those listed on the teacher survey form. Hence, comparison between the teacher and student responses is possible. Because the questionnaire completed by the Mississippi students was identical to that filled out by the Florida students, comparison between these two sets of student data is also possible. However, prior to these comparisons, the Mississippi student responses to these three items will be presented.

(A) Reasons why students enrolled in the course

The students were provided a list of 12 reasons commonly cited for enrolling in Psychology courses on the high school level. Except for some slight modification in wording, these 12 reasons were the same as provided on the list of 12 objectives teachers cited for offering these courses. This technique made it possible to compare the responses of these two groups of persons to determine the level of agreement between them (i.e., do students enroll in these courses for the same reasons schools and teachers offer them?). The students were asked to mark any and all of the reasons which they had for enrolling in their respective psychology courses. Space was provided for listing additional reasons should those identified not be appropriate or sufficient. The 724 students marked an average of 4.49 reasons each (see Table 5).

The three reasons receiving the most support among the 12 reasons listed are:

(a) to help me understand and deal with my personal problems (446 responses or 61.6%);

(b) to assist me in adjusting to life and in solving life's problems (394 responses or 54.4%); and,

(c) to help me better understand and accept myself as an individual (386 responses or 53.3%).

The three reasons least supported by these 724 students are:

(a) to assist me in understanding the vocabulary associated with psychology (104 responses or 14.4%);

(b) to help me in my vocational planning (118 responses or 16.3%); and,

TABLE 5

Comparison of the Rankings of Mississippi and Florida Student Data for the Reasons They Enroll in Precollege Psychology Courses

Reasons	Mississippi Student Responses F	%	R	Florida Student Responses F	%	R
a) To help me understand and deal with my personal problems	446	61.6	1	628	51.7	1
b) To assist me in adjusting to life and in solving life's problems	394	54.4	2	561	46.2	2
c) To ehlp me better understand and accept myself as an individual	386	53.3	3	555	45.7	3
d) To assist me in preparing for my future family life	341	47.1	4	438	36.0	5
e) To apply psychological knowledge to understand contemporary social problems and events	256	35.4	5	512	42.1	4
f) To prepare me for college psychology courses	254	35.1	6	434	35.7	6
g) To assist me in developing a basic philosophy of life	221	30.5	7	429	35.3	7
h) To ehlp me cope with problems associated with emerging adolescence	216	29.8	8	285	23.5	9
i) To help me develop an appreciation for psychology as a field of scientific knowledge and inquiry	202	27.9	9	376	30.9	8
j) To eliminate many of the misconceptions I have about psychology and psychologists	142	19.6	10	222	18.4	11
k) To help me in my vocational planning	118	16.3	11	224	18.4	10
l) To assist me in understanding the vocabulary associated with psychology	104	14.4	12	202	16.6	12
m) Other	171	23.6	--	197	16.2	--

NOTE: The rank-order correlation coefficient for these two sets of data is .98 ($p < .001$). The $\Sigma d^2 = 6$.

(c) to eliminate many of the misconceptions I have about psychology and psychologists (142 responses or 19.6%).

Of the 171 students who indicated they had "other" reasons for taking the course, 86 (50.3%) indicated they were required to take the course. Among the remaining "other" reasons these students gave for enrolling in these courses are" to learn how to 'psyche-out' other racers, I figured it would be fun and not much work, I would enjoy practicing it (psychology), to understand problems of drugs, to be in this particular teacher's room, it was required in my plans for college, and I was interested in psychology.

In contrast, the 35 psychology teachers ranked the three items these students selected as their first, second, and third most frequent reasons for enrolling in these courses as their second, third, and first reasons for offering the course. In other words, these teachers and students agreed as to the top three reasons for offering and for taking Psychology (see Table 6). Of the 12 items listed, the greatest difference exists for the reason [objective] to help me [to assist students] in my future family life. The teachers ranked this objective ninth while the students ranked this reason fourth. Otherwise, the pattern of similar rankings indicated for the top three objectives-reasons is maintained throughout the listing of these 12 objectives-reasons (r_s (12) = .76, $p < .01$).

Like these 724 Mississippi students, the 1,215 Florida psychology students responded to the exact same questionnaire items requesting they identify their reasons for enrolling in psychology. Interestingly, the reasons the Mississippi students ranked first, second, and third were assigned these exact same positions by the Florida students. In fact, these two groups of students ranked these 12 reasons in nearly the exact same position along all 12 ranked-places (see Table 5). The degree of correlation between these two sets of rankings is an astronomical .98 ($p < .001$). In other words, for all practical consideration, there is virtually no difference between the reasons these two groups of students had for enrolling in their respective courses.

(B) Topics and content believed to be important to include in these courses

A list of 22 topics usually included in precollege psychology courses was presented in the questionnaire with the request these students identify any and all of the topics they thought should be included in these (their) courses. This list was identical to that placed in the teacher questionnaire reported earlier. In addition, the students were provided the opportunity to identify "other" topics besides those listed on the survey form.

TABLE 6

Comparison of the Rankings of Mississippi Teachers and Students in Terms of the Reasons Why the Course is Offered by the Teachers and Why the Course is Taken by the Students

Objectives	Teachers F	Teachers %	Teachers R	Students F	Students %	Students R
a. To help students better understand and accept themselves as individuals	32	91.4	1	386	53.3	3
b. To help students understand and deal with their personal problems	31	88.6	2	446	61.6	1
c. To assist students in adjusting to life and solving life's problems	29	82.9	3	394	54.4	2
d. To apply psychological knowledge to understand contemporary social problems and events	26	74.3	4	256	35.4	5
e. To help develop an appreciation for psychology as a field of scientific knowledge	25	71.4	6	202	27.9	9
f. To help students cope with problems associated with emerging adolescence	25	71.4	6	216	29.8	8
g. To assist students in developing a basic psychology of life	25	71.4	6	221	30.5	7
h. To eliminate many of the misconceptions students have about psychology and psychologists	23	65.7	8	142	19.6	10
i. To assist students in preparing for faimly life	18	51.4	9	341	47.1	4
j. To prepare students for college psychology courses	17	48.6	10	254	35.1	6
k. To assist students in understanding the vocabulary associated with psychology	15	42.9	11	104	14.4	12
l. To ehlp students in their vocacational planning	10	28.6	12	118	16.3	11
m. Other	1	-	--	171	23.6	--

NOTE: The rank-order correlation coefficient for these two sets of data is .76 ($p < .01$).

The five topics these students believed most ought to be included in these courses were emotions (526 responses or 72.7%), love (513 responses or 70.9%), marriage and the family (509 responses or 70.3%), drugs, alcoholism, etc. (468 responses or 63.3%) and social behavior (458 responses or 63.3%). The three topics believed least important for these courses were statistics (120 responses or 16.6%), sensation and perception (192 responses or 26.5%), and the history of psychology (199 responses or 27.5%).

Among the "other" topics and content these students believed should be included in their precollege psychology courses are sex (8 responses), dreams (3 responses), and the brain, cloning, conditioning, dealing with emotionally unstable people, death, the generation gap, genetic engineering, masculinity/femininity, memory, personality traits, 'plastic people', schizophrenia, sexual behavior, sex and morality, sexual reactions, sterotypes, transactional analysis, treatment of mental illness, and types of treatment (1 response each).

The student rankings for these 22 topics can be compared against both the teacher rankings for topics they included in their courses (see Table 7) and for topics their teachers thought should be included in these courses (see Table 2).

A comparison of the rankings for the student responses relative to the topics they believed ought to be taught with those rankings assigned by the 35 teachers regarding the content they included in their courses reveals some degree of similarity between these two groups. The topics the students ranked first, second, and third were ranked fourth, eleventh, and fifteenth by the teachers. These findings suggest that the three topics these students considered as most important to include in psychology courses were not covered very frequently in the courses in which they were enrolled. However, in general, these teachers did tend to include in their courses the topics and content their students wanted in them (r_s (22) = .63, $p < .005$).

This pattern of general agreement among rankings was maintained when the rank-orderings of the teacher data concerning the topics they believed should be included in these courses were compared with those orderings of the student responses for this same item. The topics emotions, love, and marriage and the family, ranked first, second, and third, by the students were ranked third, fourteenth, and twelfth, respectively, by their teachers. However, despite this apparent lack of agreement between these two sets of rankings, these teachers and students did tend to agree upon what topics should be included in psychology courses offered in Mississippi's secondary schools. The degree of correlation between these two sets of rankings is .62 ($p < .005$).

TABLE 7

Comparison of the Topics and Content the Mississippi and Florida Psychology Students Believed Should be Included in Psychology Courses

Topics	Mississippi Student Responses F	%	R	Florida Student Responses F	%	R
a. Emotions	526	72.7	1	906	74.6	1
b. Love	512	70.9	2	788	64.9	4
c. Marriage and the family	509	70.3	3	714	58.8	7
d. Drugs, alcoholism, etc.	468	64.6	4	675	55.6	10
e. Social behavior	458	63.3	5	836	68.8	2
f. Personality theory	420	58.0	6	813	66.9	3
g. Mental illness	413	57.0	7	760	62.6	5
h. Abnormal behavior	388	53.6	8.5	722	59.4	6
i. Child care	388	53.6	8.5	532	43.8	17
j. Mental health	364	50.3	10	577	47.5	14
k. Mental retardation	359	49.6	11	684	56.3	9
l. The adolescent	340	47.0	12	694	57.2	8
m. Learning and thinking	339	46.8	13	632	52.0	12
n. Parapsychology, esp	331	45.7	14	637	52.4	11
o. Intelligence	321	44.3	15	620	51.0	13
p. Growth and development	309	42.7	16	548	45.1	15.5
q. Motivation	260	35.9	17	548	45.1	15.5
r. Heredity and genetics	248	34.3	18	427	35.1	19
s. The human body (physiology)	237	32.7	19	283	23.3	21
t. History of psychology	199	27.5	20	406	33.4	20
u. Sensation and perception	192	26.5	21	477	39.3	18
v. Statistics	120	16.6	22	247	20.3	22

NOTE: The rank-order correlation coefficient for these two sets of data is .87 ($p < .001$). The $\Sigma d^2 = 223$ (df-22).

A higher level of agreement was found when the rankings for this questionnaire item by the 724 Mississippi and 1,214 Florida students were compared (r_s (22) = .87, $p < .001$). The topics emotions, social behavior, and personality theory, ranked first, second, and third, respectively, by the Florida students were ranked first, fifth, and sixth, respectively, by the Mississippi students (see Table 7). At the same time, the topics statistics, sensation and perception, and the history of psychology ranked twenty-second, twenty-first, and twentieth, respectively, by the Mississippi students received rankings of twenty-second, eighteenth, and twentieth, respectively, from the Florida students. The close rankings and the high level of correlation (.87) between these sets of data indicate that these two groups of students were similar in their beliefs about what topics ought to be included in these psychology courses. In other words, Mississippi students are not much different from Florida students in their beliefs about what should be studied in their respective Psychology courses.

(C) Instructional resources desired by these students

These students were given an opportunity to identify the types of audiovisual materials and instructional resources they desired to see their teachers use in teaching them psychology. A list of 15 different types of resources was provided on the questionnaire; 13 of which were identical to those listed in the teacher survey form. A space was also provided for identifying "other" resources besides those most desired were films (577 responses or 79.7%), guest speakers (503 responses or 69.5%), and filmstrips (462 responses or 63.8%). The three least desired types of materials were posters of famous psychologists (51 responses or 7.0%), materials for slow learners (98 responses or 13.5%), and overhead thermal transparencies (112 responses or 15.5%). These 724 students checked an average of 5.47 types of instructional resources they wanted to see their teachers use in their Psychology course.

Among the "other" types of materials and resources these students desired were field trips (19 responses - 12 of which called for field trips to mental institutions), classroom discussions (2 responses), and less notes, group-talks, experimental drugs, a psychology library, magazines, sample personality tests, photographs, slides, ink blots, shorter and easier psychology tests, and case studies (1 response each). In a class where no textbooks were used, 12 students indicated they wanted a psychology textbook. The most interesting response was that by a student who desired "another principal" as a type of aid that would really help improve the psychology course.

In contrast, the three types of materials the students ranked as their first, third, and fourth, were ranked first, second, and fourth, respectively, by the 35 teachers. The item ranked second by the students, guest speakers, was not provided on the teacher survey and so comparison between these two groups for this type of material is impossible. Simulation games, ranked third by the teacher was ranked fifth by the students. The rank-order correlation coefficient for these two sets of ranked data is .84 ($p < .001$).

However, an even greater similarity exists between the rankings of these materials by the Mississippi and Florida students (see Table 8). In fact, these two groups of students ranked the exact same type of materials, films, and guest speakers, as their first and second choices. Even more remarkable, they agreed on their last three ranked materials and the ranking assigned to each (i.e., overhead transparencies, thirteenth; materials for slow learners, fourteenth; and posters of famous psychologists, fifteenth). Of the 15 types of materials listed, these two groups of students agreed on the rank assignment of 7 of these materials. In addition, the rank-order correlation for these two sets of rankings is .95 ($p < .001$). Finally, these rankings reveal that there exist virtually no difference between the types of materials desired by Mississippi psychology students and those desired by students enrolled in similar courses in Florida.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In review, these data relative to the various student responses reveal the following:

(a) the characteristics of students enrolled in psychology courses in Mississippi are very similar to those who enrolled in psychology courses in the state of Florida;

(b) the Mississippi students posited basically the same reasons for enrolling in their respecitve psychology courses as did the Florida psychology students;

(c) the Mississippi students generally agreed with the Florida psychology students as to the types of topics and content which should be included in these courses;

(d) the Mississippi and Florida students were nearly identical in their preferences for the types of materials they wanted their teachers to use in teaching them psychology;

TABLE 8

Comparison of the rankings of the Mississippi and Florida student data for the types of audio-visual materials and instruction resources these students wanted to see their teachers use in teaching them psychology

Type of Material	Mississippi Student Responses F	%	R	Florida Student Responses F	%	R
a. Films/movies	577	79.7	1	946	77.9	1
b. Guest speakers	503	65.6	2	904	74.3	2
c. Filmstrips	462	63.8	3	574	47.2	5
d. Materials for classroom experiments	404	55.8	4	679	55.9	4
e. Simulation games	383	52.9	5	704	57.9	3
f. A weekly newspaper	289	39.9	6	441	36.3	6
g. Audio-cassette tapes	269	37.2	7	373	30.7	8
h. A reference service for students	193	26.7	8	437	36.0	7
i. Career-related pamphlets	188	26.0	9	291	24.0	11
j. Student workbooks	141	19.5	10	254	20.9	12
k. Value sheets	131	18.1	11	299	24.9	10
l. Different kind of testbook	116	16.0	12	344	28.3	9
m. Overhead transparencies	112	15.5	13	206	17.0	13
n. Materials for slow learners	98	13.5	14	137	11.3	14
o. Posters of famous psychologists	51	7.0	15	88	7.2	15
p. Other	42	5.8	--	57	4.7	--

NOTE: The rank-order correlation coefficient for these two sets of data is .95 ($p < .001$). The $\Sigma d^2 = 28$ (df=15).

(e) the Mississippi and Florida students had much the same reasons for enrolling in their psychology courses as their teachers posited as objectives for offering these courses;

(f) the types of topics and content the Mississippi and Florida students thought should be included in these courses were about the same as the topics their teachers included in these courses and the topics their teachers thought should be included in these courses; and,

(g) the types of audiovisual materials and resources the Mississippi and Florida students desired to see their teachers use were much the same as the types of materials their teachers desired to see made available to them in order to teach their psychology courses better.

Probably the most interesting finding of the Mississippi student data is that their responses and rankings were nearly identical to those obtained from students enrolled in similar courses in Florida. Hence, for those who might have assumed Mississippi students were different from students in other states, these data would indicate their assumption to be invalid.

It would appear from the results of the comparison of Mississippi and Florida psychology teachers and their students that there is very little difference between these courses in these two states. If such similarities exist between two states whose populations, economic-base, and "rural-urban" nature are so diverse, then one might speculate that the Psychology course in other states, especially Southern states, are not much different from those described here.

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*These are available free upon request. Write to Dr. J. B. Hodges, Director of the Laboratory School, Gainesville, Florida 32611.

Figure 1A

A Crosstabulation of Descriptive Data Pertaining to the 724 Mississippi Secondary School Students Who Responded to the 1975-76 Psychology Survey; Percentage Data*

	SEX		RACE			GRADE LEVEL				AGE LEVEL						GRADES EARNED				
	Males	Females	Whites	Blacks	Others	Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors	14 Year-Olds	15 Year-Olds	16 Year-Olds	17 Year-Olds	18 Year-Olds	19 Year-Olds	"A" Grades	"B" Grades	"C" Grades	"D" Grades	"E/F" Grades
Males	36.5	-	28.4	8.1	.1	1.0	1.3	4.9	29.4	.3	1.0	3.5	18.2	12.5	1.0	9.6	11.2	10.1	4.7	1.2
Females		63.5	50.4	12.9	.1	1.8	2.5	16.5	42.5	1.8	2.1	12.3	30.9	15.7	.7	23.9	25.9	7.6	3.3	2.2
Whites			78.8	-	-	1.7	1.9	18.2	56.8	1.5	1.7	13.6	40.1	20.0	1.5	28.9	29.7	12.1	5.3	1.9
Blacks				21.0	-	1.0	1.9	3.2	14.7	.4	1.4	2.2	8.9	7.9	.1	4.5	7.3	5.4	2.6	1.6
Others					.2	-	-	.1	.1	-	-	-	.3	-	-	.2	.2	-	-	-
Freshmen						2.8	-	-	-	1.8	.7	.1	.1	-	-	.2	-	-	-	-
Sophomores							3.8	-	-	.3	1.8	1.0	.6	.1	-	.3	1.1	.5	1.1	.6
Juniors								21.5	-	-	.4	13.2	6.2	1.5	-	5.6	8.1	2.2	2.2	.6
Seniors									71.9	-	-	1.5	42.3	26.2	1.7	27.5	27.8	15.1	4.7	2.2
14 Year-Olds										2.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15 Year-Olds											3.1	-	-	-	-	.5	1.1	.3	.5	.7
16 Year-olds												15.8	-	-	-	4.3	6.1	1.6	1.4	.3
17 Year-Olds													49.3	-	-	19.9	18.8	8.2	2.8	1.1
18 Year-Olds														28.2	-	8.4	10.9	6.8	2.8	1.7
19 Year-Olds															1.7	.5	.5	.5	.5	-
"A" Grades																33.6	-	-	-	-
"B" Grades																	37.4	-	-	-
"C" Grades																		17.7	-	-
"D" Grades																			8.0	-
"E/F" Grades																				3.9

*Differences in totals due to students who did not respond to one of these 5 categories of items.

Appendix A

Figure 2A

Crosstabulation of Descriptive Data Pertaining to the 1,215 Florida Secondary School Students Who Responded to the 1974-75 Psychology Survey: The Percentage Figures[a]

	SEX		RACE			GRADE LEVEL				AGE LEVEL				
	Males	Females	Whites	Blacks	Others	9th Grd	10th Grd	11th Grd	12th Grd	14 Yr Olds	15 Yr Olds	16 Yr Olds	17 Yr Olds	18 Yr Olds
Males	41.4	----	35.9	4.0	1.6	.2	.5	11.4	29.1	.1	.2	5.4	17.9	17.6
Females		58.6	52.3	5.0	1.2	.3	1.8	19.8	36.9	.2	.7	11.5	27.9	18.5
Whites			88.1	----	----	.5	2.2	28.8	56.6	.2	.8	16.0	41.0	30.1
Blacks				9.1	----	.1	.0	2.0	6.9	.1	.0	.8	3.8	4.4
Others					2.8	.0	.1	.2	2.5	.0	.1	.1	1.0	1.6
9th Grade						.6	----	----	----	.3	.1	.1	.1	.1
10th Grade							2.3	----	----	.0	.8	1.3	.1	.1
11th Grade								31.1	----	.0	.0	14.6	14.9	1.8
12 Grade									66.0	.0	.0	.9	30.8	34.1
14 Year Olds										.3	----	----	----	----
15 Year Olds											.9	----	----	----
16 Year Olds												16.9	----	----
17 Year Olds													45.8	----
18 Year Olds														36.1

"A" Grades	26.3%	
"B" Grades	37.4%	63.7%
"C" Grades	23.4%	87.2%
"D" Grades	8.7%	95.9%
"E/F" Grades	4.1%	100.0%

[a] Distortion in the total percentage figures is due to the fact that student "No Response" data were not picked up in the crosstabulation procedure.

Figure 3A

Crosstabulation of Descriptive Data Pertaining to the 1,215 Florida Secondary School Students Who Responded to the 1974-75 Psychology Survey: The Frequency Data[a]

	SEX		RACE			GRADE LEVEL				AGE LEVEL				
	Males	Females	Whites	Blacks	Others	9th Grd	10th Grd	11th Grd	12th Grd	14 Yrs	15 Yrs	16 Yrs	17 Yrs	18 Yrs
Males	501	---	434	48	19	3	6	137	350	1	2	65	215	212
Females		710	632	61	15	4	22	238	444	2	9	138	336	223
Whites			1067	---	---	6	27	347	681	2	10	193	493	362
Blacks				110	---	1	0	24	83	1	0	10	46	53
Other					34	0	1	3	30	0	1	1	12	19
9th Grade						7	---	---	---	3	1	1	1	1
10th Grade							28	---	---	0	10	16	1	1
11th Grade								375	---	0	0	175	178	22
12th Grade									795	0	0	11	369	408
14 Year Olds										3	--	---	---	---
15 Year Olds											11	---	---	---
16 Year Olds												204	---	---
17 Year Olds													552	---
18 Year Olds														435

"A" Grades - 312
"B" Grades - 444 756
"C" Grades - 278 1034
"D" Grades - 103 1137
"E/F" Grades - 49 1186
No Responses - 29 1215

[a]Distortion in the total frequency data is due to the fact that student "No Response" data were not picked up in the crosstabulation procedure.